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An AWAKENING CALL to YOUNG
PERSONS.

Set forth in a

SERMON

PREACHED at

Wrentbam in SUFFOLK,

On Occasion of the

DEATH

OF A

YOUNG MAN,

(followed soon after by the Death
of Two more young Persons, and
the threatening Illness of others.)

By SAMUEL HEBDEN

LONDON,

Printed for JOHN OSWALD, at the Rose
and Crown in the Poultry. 1738.

PRICE Four Pence.

THE AWAKENING CALL TO YOUNG
PERSONS

2d PART
SERMON

PREACHED AT
WESTMINSTER ABBEY
ON OCTOBER 11th



YOUNG MAN
(Followed soon after by the Dean
of Westminster, who read
the preceding verses of scripture)

By SAMUEL HARRIS

LONDON
Printed for John Oates, in the Strand,
and Crown in the Tower. 1753.

ECCLES. xi. 9.

*Rejoice, O young Man, in thy Youth;
and let thy Heart cheer thee in the
Days of thy Youth, and walk in the
Ways of thine Heart, and in the
Sight of thine Eyes; but know thou,
that for all these Things, God will
bring thee into Judgment.*

DEATH has lately snatched away from amongst us a *very young Person*; one who was nearly related to some of you, and an intimate Companion of others of you, and not long since a frequent Hearer of the Word of God in this Place. He was not fully One and Twenty; and yet is for ever departed out of our World, being no more seen in the Places, and by the Persons, where, and with whom he was lately conversant. On this sorrowful, affecting Occasion, of the sudden Death of one so young, let me have leave to speak to you from this Passage of the *wise Man*, to make some suitable Application of it, and to leave it, when explained and applied, with the serious Thoughts of all present; you, the surviving Relatives of the deceased; you, his once intimate Associates, and all other young Persons in particular. In fixing on such a Passage as this, on the present Occasion, I somewhat conform to the Desire and Request of the Deceased,

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who, as in the Time of his Sickness he was earnestly desirous of being prayed with and for, so he desired that his Relations, and his Companions, and all other young Persons might be stirred up to take Warning from him, to mind the Pleasures and Concerns of this World less, and their Duty to God much more. I therefore this Day publish from the Mouth of the *wise Man*, or rather from the Mouth of the *Holy Ghost* himself, this loud Warning to all young People; *Rejoice, O young Man, in thy Youth, &c. but know thou, that for all these Things, God will bring thee into Judgment.*

In the Text observe,

- I. The Persons addressed to, *Every young Man.*
- II. The wise Man's Supposition, as to the present Temper and Behaviour of most young Persons; *Rejoice in thy Youth, and let thy Heart cheer thee in the Days of thy Youth, and walk in the Ways of thy Heart, and in the Sight of thine Eyes.*
- III. A serious and affecting Truth proposed to the Thoughts and Consciences of such; *But know thou, that for all these Things, God will bring thee into Judgment.*

I. The Persons addressed to in the Text, and here called upon to serious Consideration, are, *Every young Man.* I need not observe that both Sexes are included, because both are equally concerned in the Admonition and Advice given. The Word of God frequently speaks, and calls to young Persons in particular, and that for the following Reasons.

1. *Young People, as well as others, are liable to die, and after Death, to the righteous Judgment of God.* Fallen Man is born unto Trouble^a, and for

^a Job v. 7.

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the Suffering of Death. We no sooner begin to live, than we are both capable of dying, and obnoxious to it. Life is uncertain at all Ages. The Youngest, and the Healthiest to appearance are sometimes cut down before the more Aged and the more Infirm. It is appointed unto all of Mankind once to die, and after Death to appear before God as a righteous Judge. What this is owing to, you have, most of you, lately heard. 'Tis owing to the Fall of your first Father *Adam*, in whom you all sinned, and with whom we all fell from God in his first Transgression. Have you learn'd, and do you firmly believe, and seriously consider with yourselves, this great Truth? Let all begin early to learn and consider their Relation to the first Man *Adam*, their Fall in him, and their deriving from him corrupt, sinful Natures, which contain in them the Seeds of Death and all Misery, which we begin to be liable to as soon as we begin to be the Children of *Adam*. Though we are frail dying Creatures from our Birth, consequently begin to be liable to Death before we engage in any actual sinful Course; we must nevertheless look upon *Sin* as the only Cause of *Death*, and *Death* as the Consequent and Effect of *Sin*. Why are you and I mortal, or obnoxious to die as soon as we come into the World? Not merely because our Bodies are formed out of the Dust; not because God will have it so to be, without any Guilt on our part; but because we are Sinners from our Birth; and therefore are we so, because *Adam* our first Father, was, by God's Appointment, our federal Head, with whom God enter'd into a Covenant of Life and Death for himself and all his Posterity, that were to descend from him in an ordinary Way; so that when he sinned, by taking of the forbidden Fruit, all they sinned in him, and fell with him; in consequence of which every one of them is born into the World sinful and mortal.

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mortal. This is true of us as well as others. In *Adam*, or by virtue of our Relation to him, as his natural Descendants, *we all die^b*, because in him, and with him, we all sinned and fell. Since *Death is the Wages of Sin*, if we were not born fallen Creatures we should not be born mortal. Think of this, O young Man and Woman, that thou must die, and hast been liable to it ever since thy Birth: This thou canst not deny; and because thou canst not deny it, thou shouldest not desire to forget it, or to live like one insensible of it. Yet,

2. *Young People, rather more than others, are apt to presume on living many Years in this World, and to put the evil Day, the Day of Death, far from them.* Tho' they know they can't live always, they don't care to think of dying, which is a sad Instance of the Corruption of Nature, and argues a great Degree of Unfitness for Death. But, is long Life the Portion of every one? Art thou sure, O young Person, that it is designed for thee? Are not many, who not long since were jovial and vigorous, and confident of living, now dead; and who can tell how soon that may be said of us, which is now said of them, they are dead and gone? The Length of our Lives, and the Circumstances of our Dying, are already fixed by the sovereign Pleasure of that God, to whose Justice our Lives, and all that we have, are forfeited by Sin. *Is there not an appointed Time to Man upon Earth? Are not his Days also like the Days of an Hireling^c? The Days of Man are determined; the Number of his Months is with thee, O God, said Job, thou hast appointed his Bounds, that he cannot pass^d.* If so minute a Creature as a Sparrow cannot fall or die without our Father; and the very Hairs of our Heads are all number'd, is it possible, that any of Mankind, old or young, should die without

^a 1 Cor. xv. 22.

^c Job vii. 1.

^d Chap. xiv. 5.

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God's knowing and appointing it. Let the Death of Mortals be ever so sudden and unexpected to us, it was ordained by God; who, if People hasten their Ends by Intemperance, or any other Means, he permits and suffers them so to do, though he does not approve but forbids it: And if any die young, through Frailty and Distempers that are rather Hereditary or Natural, than contracted; this is not without the permissive Will of the God of Nature. But tho' God knows, and has determined how long we are all to live, when, where, and how we must die; yet these Things are concealed from Mankind; none of whom, by Observations of the Stars, or any Means whatever, must pretend to discover what God would have to be conceal'd from all living; that so, not knowing how speedy and sudden the Approach of Death may be, they may be always thinking of it, with a serious Concern, to be ready and prepared for it. But how apt are most young Persons to refuse such a serious Concern, and to cast off Thoughts of dying, like that Fool in the Gospel, who said to his Soul; *Soul, thou hast much Goods laid up for many Years; take thine Ease, eat, drink and be merry: Yet GOD soon said to him, Thou Fool, this Night thy Soul shall be required of thee*. So foolish and so miserable is every one who layeth up Treasure for himself, or for those who come after him, but is not rich towards God.

3. *The Young, as well as the Elder, have precious, immortal Souls to take care for*; Souls that are immortal in the Nature of them; and that, when separated from their Bodies, must be happy or miserable to endless Ages. Man consisteth of a Soul and a Body. These must be separated for a Time; but they shall be reunited at the second Coming of CHRIST; when our Bodies shall either be raised up

**The souls of hypocrites are at their death 144*

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X in Glory, among them who rise first, or at some Distance of Time after the Resurrection and Judgment of the Saints, among the rest of the Wicked and Ungodly. Thy Soul, O young Person, is not liable to die with the Body. When thy Body shall become a lifeless, loathsome Corpse, thy Soul will continue to live, and with its rational, active Powers, either ascend to Bliss, or descend to endless Pain. *When the Body shall return into the Dust, out of which it was at first formed, the Soul returns to God who gave it^f:* To him it returns as its merciful Saviour, or its avenging Judge. There is a State of Happiness, or a State of Misery, into which the Soul passes immediately on its leaving the Body. This State of Happiness, or Misery, prepared by divine Mercy, or divine Justice, for separate disembodied Souls, is everlasting. The *Purgatory* of the Papists (which is a State of temporary Pain, in which good Souls are reserved for their compleater Purgation before their going to Heaven, and out of which they must be released by the Services of the Church) this is but a Dream. The Word of God acknowledges no such future State of temporary Torments, designed further to purge our imperfectly renewed Souls, and more thoroughly fit them for Heaven after Death; but represents pious Souls as getting rid of all sinful Corruption at the Instant of leaving their Bodies, and then immediately becoming perfectly and for ever blessed in the Presence of God. O young Man, thy Soul will, e'er long, be perfectly blessed, or perfectly miserable for ever. If thou believest the Word of God, thou must believe this. Why then art thou so backward to think of it? Why dost thou not earnestly and frequently pray to be, by the pardoning, renewing Grace of God, fitted for escaping the Wrath to

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come, and partaking of the happy State of the Spirits of just Men made perfect? Art thou willing to be for ever miserable? This thou must be without the pardoning and renewing Grace of God; both which accompany, and are inseparable from each other. If God pardons thy Sins, he gives thee *true Repentance*; which consists *not in a Dread of Misery, or transient Fits of Concern for our Sins, or occasional Impressions made by the Word or Providence of God*; but it is *such a Sense of the Evil of Sin, as gives a fixed Dislike to it, and Abhorrence of it, as offending God, and makes the Soul willing for ever to shun it; and to serve God in such a pure, spiritual Manner as his Word directs to.* Daily pray for this Grace of Repentance, without which thou must perish everlastingly.

4. *Young People, as well as others, are capable of being impressed with the invisible Realities of another World, and the great important Truths of the Word of God.* Divines often speak from the Word; and all (the Youngest, Healthiest, and most likely to live, not excepted) should love to hear and think of what we call, *The four last Things*, Death and Judgment, Heaven and Hell. *Death* is unavoidable to all; *Judgment* will as certainly follow upon Death, as Death will close the present Life. *Heaven* will be a most delightful State to them who truly love God, hunger and thirst after Righteousness, freely renounce the Pleasures of Sin, and chuse to walk with God. *Hell* will be a most wretched and deplorable State to all others, to them who are Lovers of Pleasures more than Lovers of God; to them who eagerly follow the World, but do not seek after God and Holiness; to them who cannot readily part with sinful Pleasures, or dangerous, tempting Vanities: In one Word, to every impenitent, unconverted Soul. Such Truths as these young People are capable of understanding, of con-

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considering them when once learned, and of seriously applying them, if they are not sinfully indisposed so to do. Be willing, O young Person, to learn, and then consider with thy self what thy Concern with God, as a Ruler and a Judge, is ; how great thy Obligations to love, fear, and serve him, are ; how blessed all the Servants of God are, and will be, for ever ; into what an Abyss of Woe and Misery every one will sink at last, who does not truly love God and Holiness, and is not persuaded to be sober, righteous, and godly, while living in this World. Entertain such serious, awakening Thoughts as these : By reason of Sin I must die : The Time of my Death may be, for ought I know, very near. If Death finds me out of CHRIST, or unrenewed, I am lost for ever. Repentance is the Gift of God through CHRIST. To him, therefore, I should daily pray for it, and the Forgiveness connected with it ; to my serious, fervent Requests, adding what Endeavours I am capable of, to get my Heart affected with the great Concerns of a future World, and with an ingenuous Concern for my many Sins against God.

5. *The good Spirit of God, as he can make the awakening Truths of his Word to reach the Consciences of the most Jovial and Thoughtless of young Persons, so he can, if he will, turn their Hearts, and effectually persuade them to become true, sincere Christians.* What Mind can he not enlighten ; what Conscience can he not awaken ; what stubborn Will can he not bend to the Yoke of CHRIST ; and what rebellious Heart can he not, by his invincible Power, subdue, to the Obedience of the holy spiritual Law of God ? Now whatever he does of this Kind, he does it with, or by Means of the Word ; which therefore speaks to, and must be directed to, young People no less than others ; since as made by the God of Nature, rational and intelligent, they
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are capable both of hearing and understanding what the Word speaks to them, and of being savingly wrought upon by the *Spirit of God*, whose Word it is. The Wisdom of God would not have said, *I love them who love me; and they who seek me early, in the Prime of their Years, shall find me*²; if young Persons were not capable of being taught their Obligations to love God, and of being inclined and persuaded to do it betimes. The evangelical Prophet would not have spoken to this Purpose; *Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found; call ye upon him, while he is near*^h; if all who hear the Word, the Young as well as the Ancient, might not be made, by a divine Power, to attend to the Call, to mind and obey it. The Lord Jesus would not have exhorted us to *seek, first, the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness*ⁱ, if we were, while young in Years, incapable of being impressed with a Conviction of the Necessity of this, or of being held by a divine Hand, to a serious Consideration of the kind awakening Call, and of being reconciled thereto.

For such Reasons as these the *Spirit of God* speaks by his Word to young People; and the *Ministers of God* should speak in his Name to such, as *the wise Man* does in the Text; *Rejoice, O young Man, in thy Youth, &c.*

What the *wise Man* here delivers in the Manner of an Exhortation, must be rightly explained by us, lest the Persons addressed to, should take Encouragement from hence to indulge to extravagant Mirth, and to persist in a thoughtless Pursuit of the Pleasures and Vanities of the World; which, that the former Part of the Text was not at all designed to give Countenance to, is evident from the latter Part of it; *but know thou, that for all these Things, God will bring thee into Judgment.*

² Prov. viii. 17.

^h Isa. lv. 6.

ⁱ Matt. vi. 33.

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Some think that what we here have in the Form of an Exhortation, is a Permission and Grant for Youth to be soberly chearful, and moderately merry, *Rejoice, O young Man, in thy Youth*: Thou art not forbidden to rejoice, when, and so far as there is Occasion for Gladness and Rejoicing: *Let thine Heart chear thee in the Days of thy Youth.* The Word of God does not forbid thee to be of a chearful rather than a gloomy dejected Spirit and Temper. Be brisk and merry, especially at Times, but with Discretion and Moderation. *Walk in the Way of thine Heart, and in the Sight of thine Eyes.* Engage in such a Course of Life as is agreeable to thee, provided thou dost not suffer thy self to sin against God, to neglect thy Duty in the Season of it, and to forget the most important Concerns of the eternal World, whither thou art hastening. There is a Degree of Chearfulness and Mirth that may well consist with a Spirit of Seriousness and strict Piety. Religion does not ordinarily require People to inclose themselves in Monasteries, to retire from Company, and to renounce a sober, moderate Use of the good Things of the present World. The Servants of God have a Right to both the Conveniences and Delights, that the Providence of God does not withhold from them. As these may be made Use of with Sobriety and Thankfulness, some suppose that the former Part of the Text gives an Indulgence to such an Use of them. But though all this is true; though they who have a good Hope through Grace, of the Blessedness of another World, may soberly enjoy the Necessaries and Accommodations of this; though such as know their Sins to be forgiven, may be innocently and moderately merry at Times; though no young Persons are required to be mopish, and down spirited, and are allowed to be chearful and merry, if they are not wanton, profane, or any way irreligious; yet, as some of the Words here used will scarcely allow

us to understand the wise Man in the Sense mentioned; so the last Words of the Text plainly forbid such a Construction of what goes before. If the wise Man had only given Leave for a sober, innocent, moderate Cheerfulness of Behaviour, consistent with, and together with a serious, religious Regard to God and our Duty, he would scarce have immediately added, *But know thou, that for all these Things, God will bring thee into Judgment.* Which Words lead us to understand the foregoing, not as a Concession in favour of innocent Pleasures, and sober Mirth, while we are young and vigorous, and cheerfully disposed, but rather as a Supposition of what Youth generally incline to, and are strongly addicted to, notwithstanding the Sinfulness or Danger of such a Temper and Behaviour; and notwithstanding the strict Account they must give to him who searches the Hearts, has his Eye on every one of us, and hates the sinful Ways that our corrupt Natures strongly incline us to. *Rejoice, O young Man, in thy Youth, and, &c.* I know that thou inclinest to carnal Mirth, and chusest a brisk, jovial, merry Way of Living. The Pleasures of this World take thee off from serious Considerations of Death, Judgment, and Eternity. Thou art merrily disposed, it may be, because thou hast never, as yet, seen the deplorable Circumstances of thy fallen State, or if thou hast been at any Time struck with a Sense of it, thy Convictions have been opposed by thy corrupt Inclinations, and by degrees have been stifled and suppressed. Thou art jovial and merry, because carnally secure, or fearless of the Judgment of God; because a Stranger to that godly Sorrow, or the Grief for offending and dishonouring God, that is absolutely necessary to Salvation, and much more rational than a Pursuit of the Pleasures of Sin that are but for a Season, or an immoderate Love to, and Use of any of the good Things of this World.

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Walk in the Way of thy Heart, i. e. the Way or Course of Life which thy corrupt Heart disposeth thee for. We read in the Scripture, on the one Hand, of the *Way of God*, the Way of Holiness, the Way of the Just, the good and the right Way, the narrow Way that leadeth to Life; on the other Hand, of the *Way of Sinners*, the broad Way that leadeth to Destruction. The former is the Way or Manner of Living that God requires us to walk in. The latter is the Way, or Course of Life, that fallen Creatures of themselves chuse, and without the Grace of God restraining them from it, persist and continue in. This the wise Man, speaking to Youth as yet unrenewed by divine Grace, calls the *Way of thy Heart*. Many are the different sinful Paths, that young Persons, and others too, if left to themselves, chuse, and incline to. Let me touch them very briefly, under Three general Heads.

1. These are such as are contrary and opposite to *Sobriety*. Of this sort are, Drunkenness, Gaming, Wantonness, Whoredom, and the like. As to these the Word of Truth and Wisdom says, *Be not amongst Winebibbers, amongst riotous Eaters of Flesh; for the Drunkard and the Glutton shall come to Poverty; and Drowsiness shall cloath a Man with Rags*^k: These Acts of Intemperance tend to, and often end in Want and Misery in this World, as well as endless Pain in that to come. *Let us walk honestly* (or agreeably to our Character and Profession as rational Creatures and Christians) *as in the Day; not in Rioting and Drunkenness, not in Chambering and Wantonness, not in Strife and Envy; but put ye on the Lord JESUS CHRIST*^l; who, tho' when here on Earth he was reproached as a Winebibber, a Friend of Publicans and Sinners, and did converse with such for their spiritual Good, yet he was himself a Pat-

^k Prov. xxiii. 20, 21.

^l Rom. xiii. 13, 14.

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tern of strict Temperance and Sobriety, as well as all other Virtues, and recommends the same, as by his Example, so by his Word. The Grace of CHRIST teaches all to live soberly. The Apostle Paul would have Titus to exhort young Men to be sober-minded^m. The like Exhortation I tender to you this Day. O young Man, abstain from excessive Drinking, and all other Instances of Licentiousness and Intemperance. Abhor them, and carefully shun every Vice contrary to a sober, chaste, virtuous Behaviour, not only because they tend to Disgrace, Want, and Misery in this World, and everlasting Ruin in another; but because they are displeasing and offensive to God, who allows you to partake of the good Things of this World with Moderation, and sufficiently for the Support of Nature, but requires you to avoid Excess of every kind.

2. These are those corrupt Ways that are opposite to *Righteousness*, or Honesty and Beneficence towards Men. The Word of God exhorts, and a Principle of Religion inclines us to be honest and just, and of a beneficent Disposition, as well as sober and temperate. Young People, it must be owned, are generally less Covetous, and not so anxiously Careful about the Things of this present World, as elder Persons usually are apt to be. Yet Youth being early taught to care for the Things of the World, if some other Lust does not happen to get the Ascendant, may begin betimes to discover somewhat of a covetous Disposition, which, if Consideration, and the Grace of God, don't master it, will gain Strength and increase with their Years, till it becomes to a scandalous Degree visible and apparent. Of some it is complained, that they are so covetous as to be scarcely honest. Truly, they who are very covetous will act sometimes a mean dishonourable

^m Tit. ii. 6.

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Part, if not what may be reputed downright Dishonest and Unjust. I hope the Servants of God will, as their Lord has advised them^a, take heed of, and guard against all Imputations of such a Degree of Covetousness, which (how much soever others are tainted with it) none among Professors are more guilty of than *they* who can do little base Things through a greedy Desire of Gain, and *they* who take care to be very sparing in Acts of Charity to the Poor, and in contributing towards a Support of the Ministry of the Gospel. Let young Men be afraid of that Love of temporal Gain which is, or may be the Root of all Evil^b. What a Multitude of Sins have taken their Rise from this sordid Lust! It has produced many a Murder, many Thefts, and other Instances of Dishonesty. It has occasioned some to apostatize from the Faith, and many others it undoes, by rendering them over anxious about the World, and lukewarm in Religion. I guard Youth in particular against *this epidemical Vice*, because in the Text the *wise Man* tells them the Danger of *walking in the Sight of their Eyes*; which, as it refers in part to the Sports and Games that inconsiderate young Persons are apt to be too fond of, so it may include eager Pursuits of the Gains of this World, covetous Projects and Pursuits, which so engross the Thoughts and Cares of many young Persons at their first setting out in the World, as stifle Convictions excited by the Word of God, and take off a just, rational Concern, about Eternity. For checking this worldly Spirit, I at present offer but two or three Words. (1.) Take Notice of that in *Luke xii. 15.* which teaches you, that the Comfort and Happiness of the present Life of Man dependeth not on an Abundance, or on having more than he has Occasion for, and more than he knows how to make

^a Luke xii. 15.

^b 1 Tim. vi. 10.

a good Use of. (2.) Consider the Reasonableness of that Advice, *Matth. vi. 19, 20, 21.* (3.) The more you have of this World, without Wisdom and Grace to make a good Use of it, and to honour the Lord with it, the greater will be your Guilt, and the heavier your Condemnation hereafter. Therefore labour to be *rich towards God*, rather than to be an Owner of the Riches of this World. Desire most earnestly to be *rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom, promised to them who love God.* Frequently pray as the Psalmist did, *Incline my Heart unto thy Testimonies, and not to Covetousness.* Which intimates, that Grace in the Heart is opposite to Covetousness, and the best Antidote against it.

3. As *Godliness* is requisite, together with *Sobriety*, and *Righteousness towards Men*, so there are corrupt dangerous Ways, which lie in a more direct Contrariety and Opposition to *that*. Many who seem to stand clear of the *former*, are, notwithstanding, found walking and continuing in *these*; which are Sabbath-breaking, Swearing, a turning Things sacred to Ridicule, a neglecting to pray to God in secret, a not conversing with his good Word, a not being duly concerned for our Sins as offending God; and to perform our Duty to him, who has declared that he will not be mock'd, and that if any neglect to render to him the Honour due to his Name, it does not more certainly displease him than it tends to their own Undoing and endless Misery. Are not the Generality of Youth addicted to some or other of the sinful Ways mentioned? Be not displeased with a Word of Exhortation against each of them.

1. Many are profane *Sabbath-breakers*, in that they usually absent from all Places of Publick Worship, or will not attend on the Ministry of those who appear to be in earnest for the Good of Souls; or if they do attend there, where the Word of God

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is purely and seriously dispensed, they hearken not to it, pay not a serious Regard to it, or think no more of it after hearing; and when from under the Word, spend the Day in Talk and Behaviour very unsuitable to the Lord's Day. O, young Man, refrain from all these Profanations of that holy Day, and be persuaded, for the Lord's sake, and thy precious Soul's sake, to addict thy self to the private, and publick Religious Exercises of this Day of God. Let thine Heart be, when thou canst not be bodily present, in the Place of God's Worship, and among the professing People of God. If thou desirest a thriving Soul, and the Blessing of God on thy lawful secular Concerns, be disposed and careful to sanctify the *Lord's Day*, which many at the Gallows, and many on a Death-bed, have bitterly lamented their Neglect of, as tending, and leading to all Extravagancy.

2. Not a few young Men, as well as others, are *Swearers and Cursers*, or, *Takers of the sacred Name of God in vain*. 'Tis a Reflection cast on some, that if they don't swear they will lye. This is often maliciously designed for those who abhor both the Sins mentioned, and would not offend God by either. But are there not those who can both lye and swear? Remember that Command of CHRIST, *Matt. v. 37. Let your Communication be, yea, yea; nay, nay*, i. e. in your ordinary Discourse content your selves with bare Affirmations and Denials. Let not the Name of God be profaned by needless Oaths, by Curfes, by customary irreverent Mentions of it on trivial Occasions. We are not either to think of God, or to make mention of his Name, without Seriousness and Reverence, and a godly Fear. How soon do many learn to swear, and profane the Name of God, by playing with naughty Children, or having to do with wicked Servants, or hearing Oaths, and profane Ways of speaking from others they converse with!

3. Too

3. Too many will make a Jest of Things sacred, which is an high Degree of Profaneness indeed, and what many Swearers and Drunkards, and other notorious Sinners durst not engage in. Some young People are much taken with Books that give an Account of jocular Passages, most of which are too low and mean to afford Entertainment to Persons of Sense and Taste. But the low Employment of conversing with Books of that kind is less criminal than the Temper of some, who reckon it witty and polite (tho' it is far otherwise) to make a Jest of the Word of God, or the People of God, or what is Sacred and Religious. There is a Pleasantry of Discourse that good Men, as well as others, are sometimes noted for, and that is commendable enough, when Care is taken to keep within the Bounds of Religion, and good Manners; and when there goes along with it Remarks of Seriousness and Piety, which tend at once to entertain and profit. Yet some Christians have been so scrupulous as to dislike even this Manner of Conversation, as tho' it might belong to the foolish Talking and Jestings censur'd by the Apostle, who having said, *But Fornication, and all Uncleanness and Covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh Saints, adds, neither Filthiness nor foolish Talking, nor Jestings, which Things are not convenient, but rather giving of Thanks*^a. Let me speak a little to this Advice of the Apostle, which some will count over strict, and some serious good People may misunderstand. The Apostle mentions three Things as not convenient; (1.) *Filthiness*, wanton, immodest, obscene Talk or Behaviour, which some young Men are too much prone to. (2.) *Foolish Talking*, such Discourse as is empty and unprofitable, Talk that neither discovers good Sense or Discretion in the Speaker, nor tends to the Edification or reasonable Entertainment of them who hear it. (3.) *Jestings*. What does the Apostle mean by this? Here some

^a Eph. v. 3, 4.

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conceited Pretenders to Criticism stand ready to condemn either the Sentiment or the Language of the great and good Apostle. If his Meaning was to inveigh against either all witty Discourse, or every kind of Jestings, then his Morality was naught because morose and over severe. If by what we render *Jestings*, he meant only such Jestings as is a Breach of Civility, and a due Reverence for sacred Matters; or such jocose Talk as is scurrilous and reproachful, tending to the Injury or Disgrace of any others, then he uses a very improper Word, which no approved *Greek* Authors use in so bad a Sense. But learned Men have observed *that* to be a Mistake. The Apostle was not singular in such an Use of the Word, since one of the finest *Greek* Writers has used it in the same bad Sense. Tho' if the good Apostle, who every where expresses the noblest Thoughts in the most proper just Language, had taken the Liberty to use a Word in a Sense peculiar to himself, he had done no more than the best Writers have sometimes chose to do, and therefore had not been liable to just Reproof on that Account. Such *Jestings* as is uncivil, or irreligious, or scurrilous, is here condemned by the Apostle, and the Word he makes use of, is (in this Sense) good *Greek*, as appears from its being put in the same Sense by *Pindar*, as is observed by *Blackwall*, in his Sacred Classics, Vol. I. p. 146.

4. Too many, I fear, live in the Neglect of Praying to God in secret. If they stand clear of the foregoing Sins, they are, however, chargeable on this Head. The Duty of humbly addressing to God in secret, with suitable Confessions, Petitions and Thanksgivings, is what many are too ignorant, and others too wicked to perform. But it concerns all to begin while they are young, to learn how to pray, and to make conscience of praying suitably to their Cases and Necessities, in secret. 'Tis one Thing ignorantly to say over the Words of a prescribed Form, which many are con-

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tented with, and another Thing for a Person truly to pray, or to pour out his Heart before God; in order to which, the main Qualifications requisite are, a Concern about our everlasting State, a Sense of our Sinfulness and miserable Condition without CHRIST, a competent Knowledge of the Principles of Religion, and an Understanding of our own Wants. If we are thus qualified we know in some Measure how to pray, and can perform the Duty, in secret at least, much better without a Form than with one, as every one knows who is not a Stranger to this religious Exercise. O that young Men and Women, and all others, would learn to pray suitably to their own Circumstances, and were afraid of omitting to obey that Command of CHRIST, *When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the Hypocrites are — but enter into thy Closet, and when thou hast shut the Door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, &c.* —

5. Many care not to converse with the good Word of God. Either a stated Attendance on the Preaching of it with serious Attention, or a Reading it in private, is neglected by many. Let young People be afraid of those sinful Neglects. I recommend to them an Harkening to the Advice of *Wisdom*. If the Providence of God has not only committed his Word to writing, but taken Care to bring it down to us pure and incorrupt, should we not be thankful for the special Care taken of so choice a Treasure? And should we not, in token of our Esteem of it, as the Word of God, and able to make us wise to Salvation, and to furnish us unto all good Works, be willing to converse with it as much as we can, and endeavour the best Use of it possible? If God will speak, it must be the Duty of all to hearken, and pay the most serious Regard to what he condescends to speak to them. Can we desire that God should hear our Cries in the Time of our Distress, if we refuse to hear him inviting and

[†] Mat. vi. 5, 6.

[‡] Prov. ii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

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calling to us in the Time of Health and Prosperity? God won't continue reading and hearing Opportunities to you always. Be concerned therefore to improve them while you enjoy them, lest for slighting the kind repeated Messages of his Word, he at length make you to feel the Weight of these awful Threatnings; *Because I have called and ye refused, I have stretched out mine Hand, and no Man regarded it—I will laugh at your Calamity, and mock when your Fear cometh. Then shall they call, but I will not answer.*

6. Many rest in the external Duties of Religion, and in a Form of Godliness. They are Strangers to the spiritual Part of Religion, know not what it is to live *by the Faith of the Son of God*; what godly Sorrow and true Repentance are. When they worship before God, they are not duly concerned to offer to him spiritual Sacrifices, and to serve him with the Reverence and godly Fear that becomes all professing Christians; whereas true real Christians can feelingly say, *The Love of CHRIST constraineth us*¹; and, *through the Law we are dead to the Law as a Covenant of Works, that we may live unto God*². How many are there among Hearers of the Word, and Professors of the Gospel, who have no experimental Knowledge of such Things as these? But let all who hear me this Day, particularly young People, be concerned to get acquainted with vital experimental Religion, instead of going on in the Ways that their corrupt Hearts incline to, and walking in the Sight of their Eyes; which how difficult soever it may be to dissuade them from, and make them weary of, tend to their final everlasting Ruin; for it follows in the Text, *But know thou, that for all these Things, God will bring thee into Judgment.* Here take Notice of,

- 1st. The Truth mentioned; and,
- 2^{dly}. The Exhortation relating to it.

¹ Prov. i. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28. ² 2 Cor. v. 14. ³ Gal. ii. 14.

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The Truth mentioned is this : *For all these Things, God will bring thee into Judgment* ; in which Words the following Truths are implied.

1st. There is a God. This is the most fundamental Principle of all Religion, natural and revealed. It is as certain a Truth, as any that can be mentioned or thought of. O young Man, 'tis not more certain that thou art, than that God *is* ; and that he is such an one as his Word reporteth him to be. To suppose the Non-existence of a first, supreme, and most perfect Being, is to suppose an absolute Impossibility. Angels, Men, and all other Creatures, might not be ; but such an one as God *is*, cannot but be. I undertake not to give Proofs of a Principle which all profess to believe ; which the most inveterate Habits of Wickedness cannot eradicate out of the Minds of wicked Men ; and which every rational, thinking Person must be convinced of. They who have strove against this Conviction ever so much, have not been able, constantly, to escape Terrors of the Displeasure of a God. In the Wishes and Desires of their Hearts they have said, *There is no God* ; or they have secretly wish'd there was no such Being as God *is* ; and have endeavour'd to argue themselves into a Belief of it : But some Sense of a supreme Being has remained on their Minds after all, and the Terrors of Conscience, which were suppressed for a Time, have returned upon them, to the Disgrace of all *Atheistical Schemes* ; which Men having pleaded for, and done their utmost to support, in a Time of Health and Prosperity, have been forced to abandon, when under Affliction, and in the Views of Death. Few, if any, who have seemed, or professed to *live*, speculative Atheists, have been able to *die* such. Practical Atheists abound in the World : But if there have been any speculative Atheists, rational Persons, persuaded of the Non-existence of a

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just, supreme Governor of the World, their Number must be small ; and 'tis questionable whether there can be any within the Reach of the Word of God.

2dly. *This God is qualified, has Authority, and is determined to be the Judge of sinful Men.* (1.) He is *qualified* for it ; in that he can remember their longest past Sins ; can make *them* to remember the same ; can force all of them to appear before him ; and is able to execute such a Sentence, as he pronounces concerning them. Since God is Omniscient and Almighty, he is every Way qualified to be the Judge of all. (2.) He has *Authority* so to be ; because, being the Creator of Men, *that* gives him a Right to over-rule them ; and they being Sinners against him, *that* justly exposes them to be proceeded against by him. If God is our supreme LORD, and we his sinning Creatures, he has unquestionably a Right to take Cognizance of our Behaviour, and to adjudge us to Life or Death, to Happiness or Misery. (3.) He is accordingly *determined* to be our Judge : *He will, says the Text, bring thee into Judgment.* To the same Purpose he declares in many Places of his Word. If God will judge, who can hinder him ? As he will save some through CHRIST ; so, by him, he will judge all at the great Day. Can Sinners escape the Notice of his Eye at present, or save themselves from Death, when he will cut them off ? No more will they be able, after Death, to avoid his Judgment, or to reverse his condemning Sentence against them.

3dly. As God will judge others, so *he will not, as a Judge, pass by, and overlook young Persons.* O young Man and Woman, he will assuredly bring *thee* into Judgment. Will he animadvert on youthful Follies ? Yes, he will. If his Word reproves them, and serious, sincere Christians pray for the Pardon of them, and remember them with Concern, as long as they live ; we may be sure, that the omniscient,

scient, holy Judge will not forget them; but will bring them to Remembrance hereafter, to the everlasting Shame and Confusion of those who have committed them, and have not repented of them.

Atkly. In judging young Persons, as well as others, he will proceed according to their present Behaviour, while living in this World. We must all appear, says the Apostle, before the Judgment-Seat of CHRIST, that every one may receive the Things done in his Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad². To receive the Things done by us while in the Body; it is to be acquitted or condemned by the great Judge, according to what our present Behaviour and State are. If God gives us Grace to chuse his good Ways, and to turn, with Abhorrence, from the evil Ways that a corrupt Heart disposeth for; in Consequence of his doing this for us, and enabling us to walk accordingly, he will speak kindly to us, and deal with us as his Friends and Favourites, in the great Day of Judgment: But if young Persons, or any others, are taken out of this World by Death, before they have learn'd to hate the Ways of Sin, and to embrace the Paths of Sobriety, Righteousness and Godliness; for their Neglect of God, and their Duty, and all the evil Ways they have continued in, without a serious, godly Sorrow and Repentance for them, God will bring them into Judgment.

[1.] *He will judge them for their secret Sins.* The Thoughts of their Hearts, though never known to their Fellow-Creatures, do not escape his Eye at present, and shall not be forgotten in the great Day of Account. *When the Lord comes, he will bring to light, says the Apostle, the hidden Things of Darkness, and will make manifest the Counsels of the Hearts; and then shall every one, who is sincere, have Praise of God²; but Hypocrites shall be laid open to the View of all: Their now latent Hypocrisy, by which*

² 2 Cor. v. 10.

² 1 Cor. iv. 5.

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they deceive their Fellow-Creatures, can be no longer concealed at that Day, when he is to be their Judge, who searcheth the Hearts, and trieth the Reins of the Children of Men^b.

[2.] *He will judge us for Sins of Omission.* This is plain from the Account CHRIST gives of his judicial Procedure: *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting Fire:—For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no Meat^c, &c.* He mentions there, as the Ground of the Condemnation of *them on his left Hand*, Sins of Omission only. Some will say, in Apology for themselves, We have not been so extravagant, and are not so vile and wicked as many are. But the Question may be, What Good have you done? Do you love CHRIST, and them who are his, for his sake? Do you abhor the vain Thoughts of your Hearts, and every evil Way, because it is displeasing to God? Are you concerned to honour him with what you have, and in Worship, to serve him with Reverence and godly Fear? If you were not chargeable with any of the notorious Sins that are so rife in this ungodly Age; yet, for not praying to God in secret, for not paying a due Regard to the Word of God, for not walking with God, for all the Sins of Omission an Heart-searching God can charge you with, you are liable to *his* righteous Judgment; who, if he intends to animadvert on secret Faults, and Sins of Omission, will, without Doubt, remember, and proceed against, all the other Crimes of impenitent Sinners. *Know thou, that for all these Things, God will bring thee into Judgment.* This implies,

(1.) A rational Conviction of the Truth mentioned.

(2.) A frequent Remembrance, and a serious Consideration of it.

(3.) An Endeavour to be suitably affected therewith, and to live answerably thereto.

^b Rev. ii. 23.

^c Matth. xxv. 41, 42, 43.

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To *know* a Thing, is sometimes not only to have some Notion of it, but to think of it often, to consider it, to be suitably affected with it, and to practise according to it. To *know Wisdom*^a, is not only to have some Understanding of Truth and Duty; but so to understand them, as to think of them, and chuse to live answerably thereto. Not to *know the Ways of God*^c, (his Ways of Providence, in which he had proceeded towards his professing People, and his Ways of Precept) it is, not to be suitably affected with them, or not to affect and chuse a Walking in them. It is such an affecting, practical Knowledge that the Text recommends to young People; who, when they hear any important, concerning Truth, such as this in the Text, should seriously think of it, and often remember it, with a Concern to improve it.

11 all souls are mine

Many live as though they did not apprehend and fear a Judgment to come: But, is not this Truth? *For all these Things, God will bring thee into Judgment*; so certain, as that none, who accustom themselves to serious thinking, can avoid its bearing with some considerable Weight and Force on their Minds. If the Time would permit, and it was necessary, I could easily, and invincibly prove, on the Foot of Reason, that there is such a Being as we call God; that he is a righteous, as well as a merciful God; that he is the *Governor*, and will be the *Judge* of the World, to whom all Sinners must render an Account of their present Behaviour, and by whom they shall be, in case of continuing impenitent and disobedient, condemned. That Man scarce deserves the Name of a rational Person, who is not persuaded of such Principles as these; which, if true, must deserve a Place in our frequent serious Thoughts, and ought to be the governing Principles of our Conduct. There are none of you, I suppose, who would not profess to believe this Truth expressed in the Text. If you

^a Psal. li. 6.

^c Psal. xcvi. 10.

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know it, 'tis recommended to be the Subject of your daily Thoughts, and to be a governing Principle of the Whole of your Behaviour: *Know thou, that for all these Things, &c. i. e.* Forget not this fundamental Principle of Religion; let it be much in thy Thoughts, and upon thy Heart; endeavour to get thy Heart duly affected with so weighty a Consideration; and beg God, with Frequency, and all possible Earnestness, to incline thine Heart to his good Ways, and assist thee, for a Practice becoming them who know they must appear before God as a *righteous Judge*. How anxious have some been to enquire at what Distance the Coming of CHRIST to Judgment, may be? in what Place he will transact the Judgment to come? whether any Mention will be made of the Sins of God's People in the great Day of the Lord? &c. But these, and such like curious Enquiries, are Matters of little Significancy, in Comparison of having the Heart and Life of a Person suitably influenced and governed by such a plain, evident Principle as this; which all, indeed, profess to believe, but few duly consider: *For all these Things, God will bring thee into Judgment.*

To conclude with two or three Words.

1. Let every one, young and old, seriously apply this Truth, which the wise Man here propounds to Consideration. The best Christians may find their Account in serious Reviews of this Principle: 'Tis what none on this side Death should forget, and what all should seriously remember, as spoken to *them*, or recorded for *their* Admonition. In our Lord's Parable of the ten Virgins, the *Wise* are represented as slumbering and sleeping, as well as the *Foolish*. Or, the *Wise* slumbered, and the *Foolish* slept; till at Mid-night there was a Cry made, *Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; Go ye out to meet him*. Carnally secure Sinners, and slumbering, drowsy

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Saints, are, and must be awaken'd by such a Call; such a Consideration as this, which the Providence of God, and the Word of God, concur to bring to their Remembrance, *For all these Things, God, &c.*

The Word of God would be heard with much more Advantage than it commonly is, if the great Truths of it were but seriously applied by them to whom they belong. By what Means is it, that poor sinful Creatures are brought to be afraid of dying unprepared, and duly concerned about getting and making sure of an Interest in CHRIST? It is by a close Application of such Truths as are implied in, or connected with, what the *wise Man* mentions in the latter Part of my Text. The Truths I mean are such as these: The holy, righteous God is Judge himself^a, by such an one *all must be acquitted or condemned.* He will by no means clear the Guilty; and every one will be found such who has sinned and is not a true Believer in CHRIST, and a sincere Penitent. When a Sinner hears such Truths as these, which often return in the Ministration of the Word of God, and when hearing them he applies them, considers them again and again as spoken to him in particular, he is then afraid of falling into the Hands of the living God, and afraid of dying out of CHRIST, or without a saving Interest in him, whose Blood is indeed sufficient to cleanse from all Sin, but actually takes away the Guilt of none who do not humbly trust in him with true penitent Hearts, and are not as willing to take his Yoke upon them, and learn of him, as to be delivered by him from the Wrath to come. It is the SPIRIT'S Work effectually to apply to the Consciences of Sinners such awakening Truths as I have mentioned. But as the *wise Man* in the Text applies somewhat of them to every young Person within the Hearing of the Word, so Ministers must do the like, and every Hearer should so consider them, as concerning himself in particular,

^a Psal. 1. 6.

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as to do what he can towards getting his Heart duly affected therewith, and in good earnest concerned about Salvation through CHRIST.

2. Since God has told us that he will judge us, we should be serious, frequent and impartial in judging our selves. *Let every Man prove his own Work*, and make trial of his own State. O young Man, and every other Person, ask thy self such serious Questions as these, What has been my past Behaviour towards God and others? With what Advantage have I hitherto heard and read the good Word of God? Have I all my Life past walked in the Way of a corrupt Heart, or has the Grace of God given me a true Dislike to every sinful Way as displeasing to God, and taught me to walk humbly with him? If I had been taken away with those newly departed, what would have been the everlasting State of my never-dying Soul? Have I been made Partaker of the Grace of *Repentance* before described, which, together with *Faith in CHRIST*, is absolutely necessary to the Salvation of such a wretched Sinner as I have been? Some good Men have accustomed themselves, every Night, before their betaking to Rest, to ask themselves such Questions as these, What Sins have I been overtaken with this Day? What have I done for God and my own Soul this Day? What has God done for me this Day? Who can tell how advantageous it might be, if Hearers of the Word could be persuaded often to commune with themselves by such Questions as were just now hinted?

3. When it is said, *For all these Things, God will bring thee into Judgment*, the Meaning is not, that God will condemn thee for what Sins thou hast done and repented of, but only that God, as a Judge, will severely animadvert on all the Sins of impenitent Sinners. I could not conclude without joining, with the awful Message of the Text, this good News of the Gospel of CHRIST, that he has promised in

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favour of all true penitent Believers, not to remember any of their many Sins against them. Sincere Christians, 'tis true, may be more ready to apply such an awful Word as we have in the Text, than others to whom it properly belongs. As *Moses*, tho' an eminently good Man, and a special Favourite of Heaven, was so affected at the Thundrings and Lightnings, and Flames, and Noises that accompanied the Promulgation of the Law, as to cry out, *I exceedingly fear and quake*^f; so truly good Christians, on hearing the Thunder of God's awful Threatnings in his Word, may be struck with more Concern and Terror than Sinners, who are really liable to the righteous Judgment of God. However, the Gospel bids them, *Not to Fear*, and speaks to them in this encouraging Language, *CHRIST has redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, by being made a Curse for us*^g. *The Blood of JESUS CHRIST, the Son of God, cleanseth us from all Sin*^h. *I will put my Laws into their Hearts, and in their Minds will I write them, and their Sins and their Iniquities will I remember no more*ⁱ. So that if the Spirit of God has been at work upon you, so far as to take you off from the Ways to which a corrupt Heart inclineth, and has written the Law of God in your Hearts; if you love CHRIST in Sincerity, and humbly hope in him as a suitable, all-sufficient Saviour, you need not fear such a threatening Message as this in the Text, whenever it is proclaimed in your hearing; since it is spoken, tho' in your hearing, yet, not principally for you, but rather to affright and awaken secure Sinners, who, when brought to see and hate their sinful Ways, and reconciled to the Ways of Sobriety, Righteousness and Godliness, are then encouraged against tormenting Fears of Death and Judgment, by the good Tidings of the Gospel concerning CHRIST, as one who came to call Sinners to Re-

^f Heb. xii. 21.

^h 1 John i. 7.

^g Gal. iii. 13.

ⁱ Heb. x. 16, 17.

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penitance, and by the Merit of his Death to save his People from their Sins. One of the ancient ^{*} *Fathers* somewhere says to this Purpose, *Whether I eat or drink, wake or sleep, whatever I do, and wherever I am, methinks I hear the Sound of the last Trump, and that awful Voice, Arise, ye dead, and come to Judgment.* But tho' good Men do well to anticipate the Terrors of the great Day; and tho' Ministers of the Gospel therefore earnestly persuade Men, as knowing the Terribleness of the last Judgment to all Christless, impenitent Souls, yet every true Servant of CHRIST may think of CHRIST'S Coming to Judgment with pleasure, as humbly hoping to be acquitted, and honourably acknowledged by him. And Gospel Ministers should, together with what my Text suggests for Awakening secure Sinners, publish the second Coming of CHRIST, his Coming to judge the World in Righteousness, as good News to all the People of God. *Solomon* concludes this Book where my Text is, with a general Exhortation, and an Argument for it taken from the Subject that my Text mentions, *Fear God, and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole Duty of Man. For God shall bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret Thing, whether it be good, or whether it be bad.* Let every one attend to that Exhortation and Argument; with which, for encouraging sincere Believers, I add, *Be ye also patient, stablish your Hearts, for the Coming of your Lord draweth nigh*¹. Whatever awful Words are proclaimed for rousing and stirring up the carnally secure, do ye lift up your Heads with holy Joy^m, considering that your compleat Redemption from Sin and Sorrow draweth nigh.

^{*} St. Jerom.

¹ James v. 8.

Luke xxi. 28.



F I N I S.

